

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1871

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS SHUM, AR, PINS, TGEN
SUBJECT NAS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE VISIT AND WORLD CANCER CONGRESS

1. SUMMARY: NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION LEFT AFTER A 5 DAY VISIT
TO ARGENTINA ON MARCH 9 WITH A MIXED IMPRESSION.
SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, FROM THE PRESIDENT DOWN,
AS WELL AS ARGENTINE SCIENTISTS STRESSED TO THE NAS
GROUP THE NEED TO SEPERATE POLITICS FROM SCIENCE AND
REQUESTED THAT THEY URGE US RESEARCHERS TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE OCTOBER BUENOS AIRES WORLD CANCER CONGRESS. THE
DELEGATIONS EFFORTS TO FIND SOME "CONCRETE SIGNAL" ON
HUMAN RIGHTS ON WHICH TO BASE AN AFFIRMATIVE RECOMMENDATION
FOR THE CANCER CONGRESS FOUNDERED, HOWEVER, ON THE
GOVERNMENTS REFUSAL TL PROVIDE ANY ENCOURAGEMENT
REGARDING THE RELEASE OF DETAINED PHYSICIST, ELENA SEVILLA
(213/77/11), AND THE DISAPPEARANCE DURING THE DELEGATIONS STAY OF
A NOTED ARGENTINE BLOOD SPECIALIST, DR BEATRIZ ROSALIA
IPARRAGUIRRE DE WEINSTEIN (BUENOS AIRES 1791). END SUMMARY

2. THE NAS GROUP MADE UP OF NOBEL LAUREATED CHRISTIAN
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ANFINSSEN, DNA RESEARCHER ROBERT PERRY AND NAS STAFFER JAY
DAVENPORT, ARRIVED IN ARGENTINA SEEKING WAYS TO FACILITATE
DIALOGUE BETWEEN AMERICAN AND ARGENTINE SCIENTISTS. ANFINSSEN,
IN PARTICULAR, SAW THE DELEGATIONS MISSION AS ONE OF SEEKING
SOME POSITIVE SIGNALS FROM THE GOA WHICH WOULD ALLOW HIS
COMMITTEE TO ENCOURAGE AMERICAN SCIENTISTS AND DOCTORS TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING WORLD CANCER CONFERENCE. A MAJOR

OBJECTIVE OF THE GROUP WAS TO OBTAIN THE FREEDOM OF A YOUNG PHYSICIST, ELENA SEVILLA, WHO IS BEING HELD UNDER EXECUTIVE ARREST WITHOUT CHARGES IN VILLA DEVOTO PRISON.

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE GROUP WERE MADE THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE GROUP MET WITH THE PRESIDENT, FORMIN UNDERSECRETARY ALLARA, MINISTER OF EDUCATION CATALAN, LEADING ARGENTINE RESEARCHERS AND SCIENTIFIC GROUPS, THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD CANCER CONGRESS AND FAMILIES OF DISAPPEARED ARGENTINE SCIENTISTS AND SOME MOTHERS FROM THE PLAZA DE MAYO. THE GROUP WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO MEET WITH MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR HARGUINDEGUY NOR TO VISIT MS. SEVILLA.

4. THE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA WAS BOTH A HIGHLIGHT AND A DISAPPOINTMENT. THE GROUP SAW THE PRESIDENTIAL MEETING AS A CLEAR SIGNAL OF THE IMPORTANCE THE GOA ATTACHES TO THE SUCCESS OF THE CANCER CONGRESS. ALTHOUGH THE CONGRESS HAS 4,000 REGISTRATIONS OF A POSSIBLE MAXIMUM OF 6,000 ATTENDEES, A GREAT MANY OF THE LEADING RESEARCHERS IN THE US AND FRANCE HAVE DECIDED TO BOYCOTT THE CONGRESS. IN THE DELEGATIONS MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, THEY RECEIVED A SEVEN MINUTE LECTURE ON THE NEED TO SEPARATE SCIENCE FROM POLITICS, THE SERIOUS TERRORISTS THREAT ARGENTINA FACED BEFORE THE ARMED FORCES TAKEOVER, AND THE IMPROVED CONDITIONS FOR ALL NOW IN ARGENTINA. THE GROUP STATED ITS APPRECIATION OF THE DIFFICULT

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CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH THE GOA HAD OVERCOME AND EXPRESSED ITS CONCERN REGARDING PERSONS BEING PUNISHED FOR THEIR IDEOLOGY, SUCH AS MS SEVILLA. THE PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT PERSONS WHO PROVIDED "MISINFORMATION" WERE DANGEROUS PLOTTERS EVEN THOUGH THEY DID NOT COMMIT ACTS OF TERRORISM. ELENA SEVILLA WAS THE "CONCUBINE", VIDELA ASSERTED, OF A TERRORISTS AND WAS THUS IMPLICATED.

5. ON MARCH 9, THE GROUP WAS ASKED BY DR WEINSTEIN, HUSBAND OF NOTED BLOOD SPECIALIST BEATRIZ ROSALIA IPARRAGUIRRE DE WEINSTEIN--WHO HAD BEEN ABDUCTED IN A NIGHTTIME OPERATION THE NIGHT BEFORE--TO INTERVENE IN HER CASE. THE GROUP WAS MOVED BY THE REQUEST AND HELD A SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH THE FONMIN JUST PRIOR TO ITS DEPARTURE.

6. EMBASSY COMMENT-----

THE NAS HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION HAD A BRIEF BUT VIVID EXPOSURE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS PICTURE IN ARGENTINA. ITS VISIT GENERATED INTENSE INTEREST WITHIN THE GOA AND ARGENTINE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY. (AFTER ONE OF THEIR MEETINGS A WELL KNOWN LOCAL SCIENTIST RECEIVED CALLS FROM THREE SEPARATE ARGENTINE SECURITY OFFICIALS.) THE GROUP LEFT WITHOUT THE

CLEAR SIGNAL THEY HAD SOUGHT AND VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT
INFLUENCING THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HERE.

7. ACTION REQUESTED. DEPARTMENT PLEASE CONSULT WITH
DELEGATION SOON AFTER ITS RETURN TO DETERMINE WHAT POSITION DR.
ANFINSSEN HAS TAKEN WHEN ASKED BY SCIENTIFIC COLLEAGUES
REGARDING THEIR PARTICIPATION AT THE OCTOBER BUENOS AIRES
CONFERENCE ON CANCER.
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